Joint Theater Trauma System Clinical Practice Guideline

EMERGENT RESUSCITATIVE THORACOTOMY					
Original Release/Approval		28 July 2007	Note: This CPG requires an annual review.		
Reviewed:	Apr 2009	Approved:	6 May 2009		
Supersedes: Emergent Resuscitative Thoracotomy, 7 Nov 2008					
Minor Changes (or) □		Changes are substantial and require a thorough reading of this CPG (or)			(or)
☐ Significa	nt Changes				

1. Goal: Provide guidance on the indications to perform an emergent resuscitative thoracotomy (EDT).

2. Background.

- a. Resuscitative thoracotomy on the battlefield is indicated and warranted only in patients with penetrating injuries who present either in extremis or who have had a recent loss of vital signs. Though most of these casualties will not survive, a small percentage of patients who undergo an emergency thoracotomy can be salvaged with normal neurological outcomes possible.
- b. Emergency thoracotomy should be performed only in a facility able to support advanced resuscitative efforts (e.g. level IIb, II+ or level III facility)
- c. A subxiphoid pericardial window should not be attempted in an unstable patient.
- d. Unstable patients with penetrating injuries suspicious for cardiac injury in a level IIb/+ or level III setting should undergo immediate emergency thoracotomy.
- e. There is no role for emergency thoracotomy in patients who have suffered blunt trauma.

3. Evaluation and Treatment.

- a. See Appendix A for the Emergency thoracotomy algorithm.
- **4. Responsibilities**. It is the responsibility of the trauma team leader to ensure compliance with this CPG.

5. References.

Approved by CENTCOM JTTS Director, JTS Director and Deputy Director and CENTCOM SG

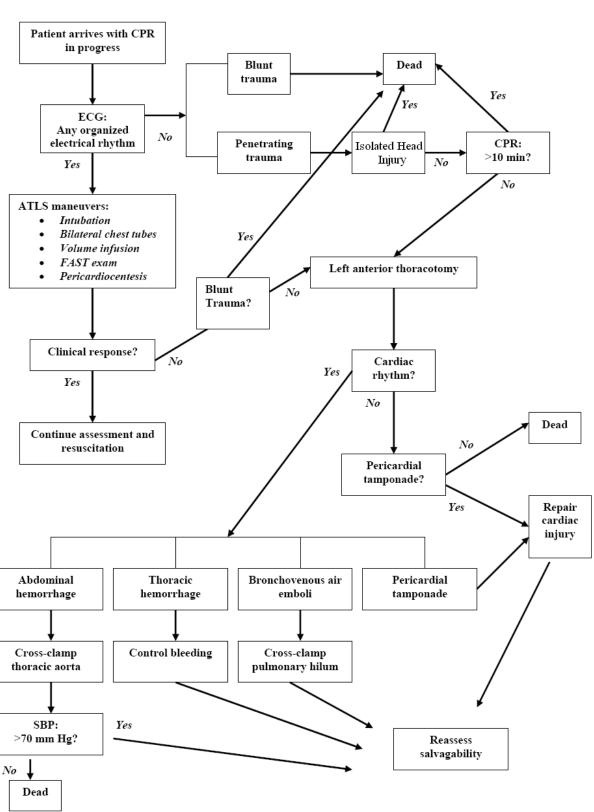
¹ Moore EE, Feliciano DV, Mattox KL eds: TRAUMA, 2004, 5th Edition

² Emergency War Surgery, Third United States Revision, 2004

³ Peitzman, et al: *The Trauma Manual*, 2002, 2nd edition,

⁴ Rhee PM, Acosta J, Bridgeman A, et al. Survival after emergency department thoracotomy: J Am Coll Surg 2000; 190(3): 288-98.5.

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APPENDIX A

JTTS CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR EMT THORACOTOMY